

Q&A on Rural Definition

21. Appendix: – Definitions – “Urban” and “Rural” (page 24)

Q1: The definition of 'rural' in the SPR spec is pretty hard to understand. Do you all use one source which has a master list of where is rural and where is not?

Q2: Currently, AoA's Instructions for Completion of Title III and VII SPR define rural as follows:

Rural – A rural area is: any area that is not defined as urban. Urban areas comprise (1) urbanized areas (a central place and its adjacent densely settled territories with a combined minimum population of 50,000) and (2) an incorporated place or a census designated place with 20,000 or more inhabitants.

Questions:

- a. What is the meaning of adjacent densely settled territories? How is density measured? What is the proximity of a densely settled territory to a central place?
- b. In order to be classified as an urban area, does an area have to meet both conditions (1) and (2) above or, an area has to meet only either condition (1) urbanized area of 50,000 or more population, or condition (2) an incorporated place or a census designated place with 20,000 or more inhabitants?

A:

1) Only one of the conditions cited in Q2b needs be met in order for an area to be considered urban.

2) Although the SPR retained the previous SPR the definition of urban/rural, which is cited in the question above, AoA has no objection to States using the Census Bureau definition, which was modified in 2000. As a practical matter, it may be difficult for many entities to apply the old definition.

The Census Bureau provides a number of resources for users to determine urban/rural status of a particular place as well as explanations for the system used by the Census Bureau to determine classification of an area as urban.

These may be found on the Census Bureau web site at:

http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html

A street address lookup may also be found at: <http://factfinder.census.gov>
AoA plans to seek a modification of the current SPR definition to bring the SPR urban/rural definition into conformity with the Census Bureau definition.

3) AoA has had the Census Bureau develop a file with the number of rural persons aged 60+ and the number of urban persons aged 60+ in each populated (Zip Code Tabulation Area). This may be a useful tool for many automated systems when the client's address is available but its use will not be mandated.